

Early Intervention Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2023

Columbus Developmental Center, Columbus, Ohio

Attendance

Kristin Askins , *Jody Vice Beal, *Carrie Beier, Julie Brem, *Maria Breno, Elisha Cangelosi, Kim Christensen, *Kathy Greenawalt-Cherry, *Bonnie Hubbard-Nicosia, Susan Jones, Sam Kingdom, *Grace Kolliesuah, Julie Litt, Maggie Gons, , Andrea Nichols , *Jennifer Ottley, *Jenni Remeis, Beth Rutter, Beth Schearing, *Erin Simmons, Jessica Smith, Allyson Vanhorn, *Susannah Wayland, JP Zalar

Nathan DeDino brought the meeting to order at 10:05am. The appointed members approved the November meeting minutes without change.

DODD Updates

DeDino, Diane Fox, and Tiffany Madden from DODD provided lead agency updates.

DeDino explained that all appointed members' terms June 30, 2023. State agency appointees' continued involvement will depend on their state agency. DeDino asked parents and providers who had served only one term to contact him if they were interested in serving a second term. DeDino also explained that all meetings are open to the public and anyone can attend.

DeDino went over EI referral and child count numbers. Both numbers were elevated. Approximately 13,500 children were being served on February 1, 2023 which is among the highest numbers since 2012. The numbers are updated monthly and are on the EI website broken out by county. Almost all counties have seen an increase in cumulative child counts in 2022 versus 2021.

DeDino discussed the five-year EI rule review and explained that the first workgroup is on Thursday. DODD is looking for different opportunities to share drafts so that we can hear from a broad range of stakeholders and so they do not have to wait until the formal public comment period. We have an aggressive schedule to look at the rules and forms, and we expect to be finished sometime in the summer of 2023. We will start with the eligibility and services rule. Katrina Bush is co-leading with Nathan.

DODD is working with Bright Beginnings around outreach. Some outreach is on hold because of increased referrals, but there are some counties that have seen some fall in their numbers. We are going to begin doing some targeted outreach in 7 or 8 counties. Bright Beginnings is, at DODD's direction, creating an outreach card for children diagnosed with hearing loss. DODD shared the card with hearing services providers and the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Subcommittee for feedback. . The format looks similar to what we did for children diagnosed with elevated blood lead levels and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) and lays out in a short way how EI can benefit a particular population.

DODD will be posting requests for proposals (RFPs) for hearing services providers and hospital-based child find. We do not anticipate any significant changes to the scope of work.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) was late in getting out the Part C application for federal funding this year. It will be posted for public comment by March 24, and we will send out an email to you and a notice in the biweekly when it is posted. The application looks mostly the same as it has in previous years, DODD has had full approval of our application in the past three years. OSEP still does not have the state allocation numbers, so the numbers for the budget will be exactly what they were last year, but will be updated later. There are delays on the Department of Education's side to get the allocation calculated. It is possible that there will be increased funding for service coordination, but it is not certain as of this point. The whole application was delayed because there are some changes that Congress put in place about how all federally-funded programs are reaching underserved populations. All states must answer questions about 10 years ago, and now four more targeted questions are part of all states' applications. DODD's responses to those questions will be flagged and available for public comment.

With the EI service coordination grant for SFY24, We are retaining the \$2M increase added last year and plan on maintaining an allocation formula that with a similar structure as the past years. Ahead of the SFY25 allocation, we plan to discuss with stakeholders any possible improvements they might think are necessary for the formula. In SFY24, we are clarifying the role of the EI contract manager and expectations for oversight and what should be shared with the local Family and Children First Council (FCFC).

We are adding a member to our EI monitoring staff and will announce this later in the month. This will be helpful for counties and we can collaborate and get ahead of some problems that always come out in the end. OSEP is putting a great focus on compliance monitoring, and this new position will assist DODD and local EI systems in ensuring compliance.

Governor DeWine is proposing a new Department of Children and Youth. Information about the new agency is summarized on Bold Beginning website and lays out the information about the new department. EI has been proposed to be a part of the department along with Children Services, Childcare, early childhood mental health consultation, one of the Medicaid programs, Home Visiting, Infant Vitality, the Fatherhood Commission, the Imagination Library, licensed preschool. The plan is to have everything complete by January 2025. The Governor has proposed this new agency to improve efficiencies, streamline eligibility, and to lead to better results for children and families. As they have updates, they will be posted on the Bold Beginning website..

We are planning to continue funding the Councils of Governments (COGs) for evaluation and assessment in SFY24. We were using one-time ARPA funds to support them and that funding comes to an end on September 30. COGs have been great partners with us, and we are looking at continuing that funding at some level in the upcoming fiscal year. This is helpful for counties who have seen increased referrals or have some vacancies. DODD is also running a pilot in Scioto county with the county board that has partnered with Jackson to expand full team access

Diane Fox discussed that DODD expects the SFY24 EI service coordination grant agreement materials to be posted at the end of March or early April. Tracy Millhon has taken the fourth regional program position. Kelli Lanzot is handling all fiscal matters and providing guidance around the EI service coordination grants and approving budgets, budget amendments, and expenditure reports. All 88 counties have a TA and training plan. This is where the state team

and the local teams have communication about data related to compliance, eligibility, county annual performance report, etc. This approach is supportive, responsive, and can be updated at any time. The program consultants have been performing more face-to-face meetings and trainings.

Fox explained that she is a part of the Education Committee for the Opioid Policy Academy. The committee supports providers that are providing services and working with families. The committee is working through the Plan of Safe Care requirements and we are building local teams to wrap supports around the families. We are working with six counties who are receiving technical assistance and training around implementing Plans of Safe Care.

Fox informed the group that Ohio has been granted the birth to 5 grant which will bring in tremendous resources to coordinate. Project Open House helps the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) with looking at policies that are more inclusive of children with special needs.

Fox then discussed opportunities some changes in the multi-system youth space to serve younger children, who to engage in assessment, and how to use coaching. into authentic assessment practices. EI and ODE have revised the early learning standards.

Tiffany Maden then provided comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) updates. In November 2022, DODD shared that our CSPD 4-year plan was ready to be posted and it is currently posted on the EI site. We are working through the plan and starting to look at immediate strategies to increase the EI workforce. Debbie Ashley plans to continue the Routines Based Interview (RBI) training as well as the Ecomap training and “How to ask tough questions” training. We met with Brazelton regarding the Newborn Behavioral Observations (NBO) training and we plan to continue offering training. Our Home Visiting partners introduced us to an online Reflective Supervision course. We are taking a look at the online version to determine if we want to accept that training for EISC supervision.

If you provide EI services in your agency, we need the OCCRRA dashboard set up, have the EISCs log into their account, and tag the EISC agency where they work. The EISC leadership can monitor credential status and PD status. Some people may have emailed DODD because of courses not being verified in OCCRRA. We are working on fixing that connection, and we are close to resolving those issues.

A few months ago, DODD implemented a supplemental pathway for EI service coordination credentialing because it is difficult to find SC candidates. We developed guidelines and a process for an alternative pathway for those seeking SC credentialing. Examples for good candidates are those who have experience in the disabilities field but have not worked with children, or those people in the field with hours equivalent to an associate degree, or those who have worked with or have family members with a disability. There have only been two credentials issued under this alternative pathway thus far, so we want to see if this helpful and find out what additional barriers exist with this.

We have a pilot training series with DODD contract, AnLar, to ensure access, inclusion, and belonging in EI. Tomorrow will be our last community of practice (COP) meeting. Attendees put together an action plan of how they will change their systems. AnLar will give DODD a written report, and we will start a future plan for how to continue this work.

DODD plans in SFY24 to focus on the eligibility and assessment process to take a look at authentic assessment practices and to ensure that teams are determining eligibility currently. We are starting with an online training for supervisors to use to train their staff.

EI Family Questionnaire

Taylor Hammond and DeDino led a discuss about the EI family questionnaire. Beginning with next year's APR, all states need to add a factor to look at representativeness. We have reported out on race and ethnicity for many years, and we must continue to increase the representativeness of Black/African American and Asian families. For other categories OSEP looks at for representativeness (e.g., child age), there are not significant differences. DODD shared data with the group from last year's questionnaire on various breakdowns of responses and their degree of representativeness.

DODD proposes looking at population density as the additional factor for representativeness. We have a fairly significant difference in response rates based on population density. Some of the rural counties have the largest response rates, but our largest metro counties have some of the lowest response rates. One of the benefits of using the county population size as a factor is the way that our population is divided up in Ohio, a majority of the underrepresented Asian and Black families are living in counties with low response rates and are underrepresented. Meeting attendees then broke into smaller group to discuss the following questions:

Discussion Questions:

- Which factor(s) OSEP lists do you think DODD should consider when looking at representativeness?
- What do you think about considering county population density (as measured by the CDC)?
 - It makes sense to target county population density
 - Can an audio version be added
- If DODD used county population density, what are some strategies for supporting counties in boosting response rates?
 - Can start with a QR code that families can scan and use to respond back
 - Can make cards with QR codes and include their ID numbers to make it easier and have it be easier to access it
- What additional data would you like for the May meeting?

After concluding small group discussions, there was a share out with the broader group. DeDino informed the group that they would need to make a final decision at the May meeting about the additional factor.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.